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PRESS RELEASE

AMBASSADOR MORIARTY VISITS COX'S BAZAR AND TEKNAF: REAFFIRMS US GOVERNMENT'S LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPMENT

DHAKA, JULY 10 – U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty visited Cox's Bazar and Teknaf from July 8-10 to review development activities in the region. During his visits to various U.S. government-funded projects, the Ambassador reaffirmed the U.S. government's long-term commitment towards the development of Bangladesh. He also visited several Rohingya refugee camps to learn more about this important issue. Mrs. Moriarty and Mr. Carey Gordon, Acting Mission Director for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), accompanied the Ambassador.

During his stay in Cox's Bazar, Ambassador Moriarty visited U.S. government-funded environment, health, energy and small and medium-business projects. His trip started with a visit to the U.S. government-supported rural electrification project. The initiative creates employment for rural women while bringing electricity to the doorsteps of rural people through solar home systems that generate electricity from solar power. The project focuses on increasing household access to energy through solar power by training women users, entrepreneurs and technicians to assemble and maintain solar home systems. The Ambassador met with solar home system users, women entrepreneurs who were trained to install and maintain the solar home systems, and women technicians. He was impressed by their skill and professionalism and commended them for their involvement in income generating activities, and their exemplary effort to improve their lives and contribute to the national economy.

Later that day, Ambassador Moriarty visited the Memorial Christian Hospital to learn more about the U.S. Government-supported fistula (a childbirth injury) treatment and rehabilitation service. The U.S. Government supports services to repair fistula, while simultaneously working with communities to spread information and awareness about fistula prevention and treatment. This funding has provided care to more than three hundred women since the inception of this project in 2005. Mrs. Moriarty met with patients and offered encouragement and support.

Afterwards, the Ambassador visited a shrimp hatchery to observe the hatchery operations as well as the production of shrimp larvae. He also visited the shrimp virus testing laboratory. Larvae tested in this laboratory are being distributed to shrimp farmers who lost their livelihood due to Cyclone Sidr. The U.S. Government will also work with the shrimp farmers to identify and add value to the production and export of shrimp in the coming years.

The next day Ambassador Moriarty visited a madrassa in Teknaf and inaugurated a U.S. Government-supported biogas plant. The biogas plant, the first of its kind in the Chittagong division, is expected to reduce the need for consumption of firewood from local forests. The use of biogas at this madrassa will replace 7.5 tons of fuel wood and save 288 mature trees per year, preventing 50 tons of green house gas from entering into the atmosphere. The Ambassador congratulated the madrassa authority for being environmentally responsible and expected that this initiative will help save the forest and will be replicated in the community. During his interactions with students and teachers at the madrassa, Ambassador Moriarty underscored the role and importance of their involvement in the national development efforts.

Later that day the Ambassador visited the Mochoni Nature Park and inaugurated the nature interpretation center. He highlighted that nature-based tourism initiatives have great potential and reiterated the U.S. Government's commitment towards sustained economic growth for Bangladesh. He commended the local government as well as the community for practicing collaborative management of natural resources that involves the entire community as well as the government. He complimented them on empowering the local community with the devolution of trust and power to local communities which has brought outstanding results in terms of environmental management in that area. He also thanked the Government of Bangladesh for their active support for sound environmental governance and increased transparency in the management of resources.

Following the visit to the nature reserve, Ambassador Moriarty visited with Rohingya individuals in the Tal, New Leda and Kutapalang refugee camps. He interacted with local officials and camp residents and observed the living conditions of the refugees.

The Ambassador's three-day visit concluded with a visit to the Polli Bidyut Shomiti in Cox's Bazar. The U.S. Government works in partnership with the Rural Electrification Board to assist with the management of the PBSs and also to raise awareness among the local authority as well as the beneficiaries about their rights and responsibilities. The Ambassador met with local authorities and congratulated them for a well managed cooperative. He also met with beneficiaries waiting for new connections and to pay bills, and asked about their satisfaction with the services received. The U.S. Government has supported the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Program since its inception in 1977 and has contributed more than \$220 million to increase access to energy in rural areas.

The United States Government has a long history of extending assistance to Bangladesh. The U.S. Government's assistance to Bangladesh includes support for free, fair and credible elections and more transparent and accountable governance; assistance for a better educated, healthier and more productive population; and funding to increase economic opportunities through equitable economic growth, and improved food security and disaster mitigation. The U.S. Government has provided more than \$5 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this press release is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)

